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| Parallel Lives | | |
| 40 Years in the Desert |  | Our Lives/ My Life |
| **The lifetime** of 40 years in the wilderness was a tough learning experience for the Israelites. But they absorbed the lessons.  **The Ten Commandments** given by God were the blueprint setting out the moral codes that will enable human beings to live according to their true nature.  **Moses established codes and guidelines** enabling the people to remain faithful to God’s calling and to overcome moral and spiritual weakness found in each person.  **It was called the ‘Law’**. It fleshed out the Commandments, keeping a path open for people to remain with God, without grace, until Christ came with grace: the final and true solution.  **The codes and practices set out by Moses** guided their lives, enabling them to keep on the right path: the path to happiness and peace.  **The Goal:** Eventually they entered the earthly ‘promised land’.  “…follow (the decrees and laws) so that you may live, and may go in and take possession of the land that the Lord, the God of your fathers, is giving you.”  Deuteronomy 4:1 |  | **The lifetime** we live out is our personal journey through the wilderness. It is a tough learning experience for everyone. Will we absorb life’s lessons?  **The Ten Commandments** given by God were the blueprint setting out the moral codes that will enable human beings to live according to their true nature.  **The ‘Law’ of the Old Testament set the stage** for the new law that Christ would bring: the full and final way of enabling people to remain faithful to God’s calling and to overcome moral and spiritual weakness found in each person.  **Living in Christ and with Christ replaces the old Law.** The commandments remain. God himself lives with His people in His Church. Christ brings grace, which is nothing other than God dwelling in a person.  **The teachings of Jesus Christ, the Sacraments and a life of prayer** enable people to keep on the right path: the path to happiness and peace.  **The Goal:** Eventually to enter the heavenly promised land.  “He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood lives in me and I live in him.”  “Anyone who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life.”  John 6:54 |
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| God offers learning opportunities through every experience. | | |
| **They worship the Golden Calf** (false Gods) and essentially reject the God who has taken them out of the slavery of Egypt.  Once they repent that, Moses organises the building of the tabernacle, and the ways of worshipping God.  He rewrites in stone, the 10 Commandements, which are carried in the ark of the Covenant, along with the manna (bread).  The people commit to following God faithfully.  After one year of preparation, they set off through the wilderness. |  |  |
| Food, water, shelter are lacking.  The people are sullen, rebellious and complaining.  God performs miracles to supply for those needs.  The people quickly return to pessimism |  |  |
| They are attacked unprovoked by Amalek  Joshua and Moses defeat the enemy.  The people are still disheartened. (Exodus 17:8) |  |  |
| Moses trustingly sends the 12 leaders to check out the land God has promised.  They come back with negative reports, despite the fact there is much good to report. They only see problems and exaggerate them. (Numbers 13: 27-29)  Wild desperation hits the people of Israel. God tells them they will not enter the promised land. The next generation will have that honour and privilege. |  |  |
| Despite being related to Moses and Aaron, a Levite and bearer of the Holy Ark, Korah instigates rebellion.  He presents his case in idealistic terms: that everyone is as holy and good as Moses and Aaron. He says they have no special right to rule over the people. (Numbers 16:3).  His real reason is that he is angry and jealous for not having been given a high office he thinks he deserves.  Hundreds join him.  He wants a man-made faith and religion: something of the people rather than of God. Man-made versus Godly revealed religion.  Result: Korah and followers were swallowed up in the earth.  Moses leadership was not questioned again. |  |  |
| The Moabite King Balek sent the pagan prophet Balaam to curse the Isaelites.  He saw them as a threat.  Balaam finds that instead of a curse, God uses him to make prophecies and to give blessings.  *I shall see him, but not now; I shall behold him, but it is not near; a Star shall come from Jacob and a Scepter shall arise from Israel…. And he shall exercise dominion from Jacob …*  *Numbers 24:17-1*  That’s not all:  He (Balaam) counselled that King Balak and his people ensnare God's chosen people by offering them prostitutes and unclean food sacrificed to idols. Numbers 25:1-9 describes how Israel engaged in sexual immorality and idolatry with the women of Moab, resulting in God's anger and a deadly plague. Numbers 31:16 attributes this to the advice of Balaam: “Behold, these caused the children of Israel, through the counsel of Balaam, to commit trespass against the LORD in the matter of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the LORD."  (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Balaam>) |  |  |
| Moses did not enter the promised land himself. His final words were a reassurance of God’s Love and Blessings.  He told them what he could see: a life of difficulty and challenges.  He reassured them that blessings will overcome curses, that goodness will triumph over evil. That if they keep coming back to God, and are faithful, they will receive God’s blessings.  Deuteronomy 33: 26-29  “There is no one like the God of Israel!     He rides on the clouds in his divine greatness.     He comes riding through the skies to help you. **27**God lives forever.     He is your place of safety. His power continues forever!     He is protecting you. He will force your enemies to leave your land.     He will say, ‘Destroy the enemy!’ **28**So Israel will live in safety.     Jacob’s well belongs to them. They will get a land of grain and wine.     And that land will get plenty of rain. **29**Israel, you are blessed.     No other nation is like you. The Lord saved you.     He is like a strong shield protecting you.     He is like a powerful sword. Your enemies will be afraid of you,     and you will put your foot on their backs![[g](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Deuteronomy+33&version=ERV#fen-ERV-5711g)] |  |  |
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